abolition of licensing for seed dealers, facility for import of best quality seeds, encouragement for export of seeds and creation of Seed Banks and National Seed Grid.

Finance Ministry's approval to a Railway Project

*98. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have decided to implement an ambitious plan for taking up a programme on the lines of the National Highway Development Project, by sending a Rs. 26,000 crore proposal to the Ministry of Finance; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Railways (MoR) have decided to strengthen the Golden Quadrilateral and its Diagonals which forms the High Density Network (HDN) and is saturated in most parts. The Golden Quadrilateral connects the four metro cities *i.e.* Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai. The strengthening of this route will be done by laying of additional lines, improvement in terminals, electrification of selected sections and raising the speed of freight trains up to 100 kmph thus reducing the speed differential between Mail/Express trains and freight trains.

Some of the sub-projects of this programme were already sanctioned and work on these components is in progress. The sanctioned cost of these projects is approx. Rs.1800 crores. In addition, new sub-projects have been identified for sanction. The total cost of this programme is yet to be finalized, however it is expected to be in the range of Rs. 8000 crores.

Agri-clinics and Agri-business Centres

*99. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Agri-clinics and Agri-business Centres set-up in the country, State-wise, as on 31st March, 2002;